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Current Developments

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Helping People Help the Land

September 2006



Message from the State Conservationist

We have come to the end of another fiscal year. This has been a difficult year; in fact, we have just lost three longtime friends of conservation - Arthur Bentley, Joe K. Thomas and Samuel Bacon.

No doubt, Arthur Bentley, a NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, was responsible for putting more conservation on the ground in Lauderdale County than any other person. All of them have made outstanding contributions to conservation in their lifetime. We will miss them, not just as fellow employees or friends of conservation, but simply as the friends they were to many of us.

In many ways, this has also been a rewarding year because we discovered new ways to test our dedication and commitment to conservation. We have proven how remarkable and successful we can be when we work as a team for a common cause. The difficulties of this year have caused us to scope our vision deeper into the future and to renew and restructure our relationship with our partners in conservation.

It was early this year when I informed you that NRCS in Tennessee was experiencing a budget shortfall. While our Financial Assistance allocations to landowners have risen over the years (which is good news), our Technical Assistance allocations—the money that pays our bills—has not been rising accordingly (and that is not good news.)

We tightened our belt by developing a plan to save money on rent and also move toward a watershed based field delivery structure. We are implementing that process now, and will continue to do so over the next year or two. In the meanwhile, you picked up the ball and ran with it.

As a team, you went into overdrive promoting and encouraging conservation through our Farm Bill programs, resulting in an unprecedented number of EQIP and WHIP applications. During FY 2006, due to your great efforts, we saw an increase of 90% in EQIP applications and 75% in WHIP applications. I am extremely proud of your efforts, which was one element that turned our budget situation around. Thanks to the increases in Farm Bill program applications and our comprehensive cost savings plans, we are finishing this fiscal year on budget. We did it—you did it—by working ourselves out of the deficit, by working closely with the conservation districts, and by working in tandem with our state and local partners. We have worked together with a lot of people to touch the land, and the beneficiaries are the landowners and the land itself.

In future years we will use the National Strategic Plan as a roadmap for conservation. If we can stay focused on the three Guiding Principles—Service, Partnerships, and Technical Excellence—then we can make Conservation in Tennessee the model of the nation.

James W. Ford

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Grant Puts Local Artist's Work on Permanent Display

The art of Perry County artist Clara Fodor now has a permanent home. Ms. Fodor is a nationally known quilting and embroidery artist who has lived in Perry County since 1981.

Clara Fodor has had an interesting journey through life. Clara grew up in Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia in the 1920's. She loved traditional Hungarian embroidery, but due to poor eyesight was discouraged to learn it by her school. However, a neighbor taught her how to do the traditional embroidery, which was the only training she ever received. She would later use a magnification lamp to enable her to develop her talent.

She immigrated to the US at seventeen with her family, later married Eugene Fodor; attended college, raised three children and taught school. During this time, she never lost her love for quilting and has now produced between 700 and 800 appliquéed quilts.

She showed her love for America by creating a quilt hanging for each state, completing the last one in 1994. She donated her fifty state quilts to the Tennessee State Museum.

In 2003, Clara received the Folklife Heritage Governor's Award in the Arts for her work as a quilting and embroidery artist. She recently created a hanging for Perry County at the request of Jim Azbill, Mayor of Linden and RC&D director.

The Buffalo/Duck River RC&D Council received a grant from the Tennessee Arts Commission to construct a museum quality display for that quilt. Thanks to the grant funding, Perry County residents and visitors can view Ms. Fodor's art which is now on exhibit at the Perry County Community Development Center.

Federal Women's Program Manager

by Debbie Brasfield

As my tenure as Federal Women's Program Manager comes to an end I'd like to take this opportunity to say how much I have enjoyed serving in this capacity, and how much I have appreciated the cooperation and support I have received from all of you. I hope you will continue this support with the new FWPM. I leave you with these words:

We have different educational levels— high school diplomas, technical degrees, bachelor and master degrees. We work in a variety of positions in the agency. We are biologists, soil scientists, administrative assistants, district conservationists, managers, technicians, and more.

We have diverse interests. We have women who ride motorcycles, play sports, and run marathons. Others sew, garden, paint, quilt, and volunteer in their community. Some are photographers, avid collectors, musicians, artists, and bird watchers.

Across the board, we are single, married, divorced and widowed. We have dealt with loss and triumph. We are a mixture of different ethnic groups. Some of us still live in the home town we grew up in; others have lived in several states and/or foreign countries. Some have infants and small children; others have children who are finishing high school or college; some are dealing with the "empty-nest" syndrome while still others are caring for aging parents and grandparents.

And yet, in spite of these differences, we are friends and coworkers who share a common goal of protecting and improving our natural resources. In our own way, each of us is "helping people help the land."

In retrospect, my term as Federal Women's Program Manager has been a very positive and rewarding experience. I have especially enjoyed the opportunity to get to know the NRCS employees across the state. Albert Schweitzer once said, "In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit." To those of you who rekindled my inner spirit, I thank you.

New NRCS Statewide Outreach Coordinator Named

State Conservationist James Ford has named Aaron Robinson to be the new Statewide Outreach Coordinator for NRCS. Aaron also serves as the Community Resource and Economic Development Specialist at Tennessee State University. Prior to those positions he spent five years as the Small Farms Specialist for Giles, Lincoln, and Maury Counties under TSU's Cooperative Extension Program.

Aaron grew up in Brookhaven, Mississippi and received his associates degree in Agriculture from Copiah-Lincoln Community College; his bachelor of science in Agriculture Economics from Alcorn State University; and his master of science in Agriculture Education from Alcorn State. In addition to his knowledge and love for agriculture, he's a big football fan (especially the Titans!), and he is the proud father of two children. Welcome, Aaron!



James Ford, NRCS State Conservationist (left) has named Aaron Robinson as the new Statewide Outreach Coordinator for NRCS-Tennessee.

North Carolina to host 6th Mid-Atlantic Dairy Grazing Conference

The 6th Mid-Atlantic Dairy Grazing Conference will be held in Goldsboro, NC on Tuesday, October 31 and Wednesday, November 1, 2006 with registration beginning at 12:00 Noon.

The conference presentations kick off at the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 31. The keynote talk will feature Mr. Gary Zimmer, of Mid-Western Bio-Ag. Gary is an organic producer from Wisconsin and author of *The Biological Farmer*. CEFS is the location of a wide range of multi-disciplinary studies, including dairy, long-term cropping systems, organic cropping, a hoop house swine unit, and a beef cow-calf system. Optional tours of the work at CEFS will be conducted on Tuesday morning, October 31.

The conference will feature highlights of recent applied research work at the CEFS dairy unit. This dairy comprises a 160-cow herd managed under a fall-calving, pasture-based system and includes purebred Holsteins and Jerseys and crosses between these breeds. A 3-year trial with cows stocked at either 1 cow/acre or 1.5 cows/acre is just being completed. Information on production, reproduction, economics, parasite control, indicators of health and immune function, milk flavor differences from pastured cows, and other topics will be presented.

Dairy genetics researchers from around the U.S. will be joining dairy graziers on Tuesday afternoon and evening to discuss breed selection strategies for pasture-based dairy systems. The Tuesday afternoon program will include presentations on several practical research topics, and a tour and discussion of various aspects of the management of the dairy unit, which will be in the middle of the fall calving season.

On Wednesday, November 1, the conference activities will move to the nearby Wayne County Agriculture Center in Goldsboro for more presentations and discussion. Topics including facilitating smooth dairy farm transitions to the next generation, management of dairy grazing systems, organic dairy production, and discussions featuring experienced dairy graziers from several states will highlight the second day's events. Conference proceedings will be available. Research work at CEFS is supported in part through the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program.

Registration information for the conference will be available at: www.cefs.ncsu.edu or by contacting Steve Washburn, Extension Specialist, North Carolina State University at Steve_Washburn@ncsu.edu or (919) 515-7726.

Upcoming Events

Smoky Mountain RC&D Development Forum

Contact Eston Williams at 865-674-8890
for more information

September 26-27, 2006

RSVP by September 21, 2006 with number attending
to eston.williams@tn.usda.gov or call 865-674-8890

Giles County SCD Wildlife Habitat & Native Grass Field Day,

Contact Rusty Walker or KrisBailey for more
information at 931-363-5353, ext. 3

October 4, 2006 (8:00 -1:30)

RSVP by 9/22/06 to 931-363-5353, ext. 3
or email - Kris.bailey@one.usda.gov

Soil & Water Conservation Society

For more info, call Charles Roberts @
615-277-2575 or email cvroberts@comcast.net

October 13-14, 2006

Falls Creek Falls State Park

6th Mid-Atlantic Dairy Grazing Conference

For more info, call Steve Washburn, at
Steve_Washburn@ncsu.edu or 919-515-7726

October 31 - November 1, 2006

Goldsboro, NC

SAMAB's 17th Annual Conference

Call 865-974-5912 or go to www.samab.org

November 28-30, 2006

Holiday Inn SunSpree; Gatlinburg, TN

Cheatham County Partnership Reduces Streambank Erosion

by Carolyn Dillard

A severely eroded streambank on Sycamore Creek was cause for concern for Cheatham County landowner, Danny Cuff. "For years we raised corn on this field and each year the creek eroded the fields washing away valuable top soil", said Cuff. "You can't get that back once it is gone. For this reason we will never grow corn in this bottom again."

They were also losing several feet of streambank to erosion yearly, resulting in increased sediment loads to the stream. Since this is a detriment to water quality and fish habitat. Mr. Cuff contacted the Cheatham County Soil Conservation District for assistance.

By working with the soil conservation district, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the TN Department of Agriculture, Mr. Cuff received cost share assistance to address this problem. A combination of rock jetties and riprap were used on the streambank. Trees and grass were planted on the bank to stabilize the riparian area and to protect the bank from further erosion.



Photo above: Rock jetties and riprap were used on the streambank on the Danny Cuff farm in Cheatham County. Trees and grass were planted to stabilize the riparian area and to protect the bank from erosion.

Grazing for Profit Conference to be Held Friday, October 6 in Spring Hill, TN

As many as one hundred cattle producers and other livestock owners are expected to take part in the upcoming Grazing for Profit Conference in Spring Hill, Tennessee. The conference, scheduled for Friday October 6, 2006 at the Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center in Spring Hill, will offer participants important information leading to a more productive and profitable grazing operation.

Experts scheduled to appear at the conference include retired agronomist Dr. Burt Smith of the University of Hawaii, who has written books on grazing and herding. He will discuss the art and science of low stress animal handling. Dr. Jennifer Lanier, a private consultant currently working in Latin America, will talk about generating high profits from low stress handling, transport and slaughter of livestock.

Dr. Frederick Provenza, a professor in the Department of Forest, Range, and Wildlife Sciences at Utah State University, will talk about his research into animal behavior. He will share the results of years of study into the behavior of very young animals, looking especially at how they learn from their mothers and the importance of early nutrition. Dr. Provenza oversees a consortium of regional universities working to increase the ability of producers and land managers to use behavioral knowledge to better reconcile the ecological, economic, and social facets of management.

Other speakers will discuss improving foraging management, understanding foraging behavior, and becoming acquainted with diseases affecting cattle in Tennessee. The cost for participating in the Grazing for Profit Conference is \$50 per person or \$80 per couple.

The sponsors include Maury County Soil Conservation District, Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Tennessee Grazing Coalition, and Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc.

To register, and to learn more information, contact Judy House of the Maury County Soil Conservation District at 931-388-1307 ext 3.

Fugate Receives Tennessee Small Farmer of the Year Award

Claiborne County resident Rodney Fugate was the recipient of the Tennessee Small Farmer of the Year Award on August 3, 2006 at the TSU Agricultural Research and Extension Demonstration Farm in Ashland City. The award is presented through the Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Program annually.

After writing a college research paper exploring the possibility of converting his farm from beef cattle and tobacco production to an alternative sustainable livestock operation, Rodney Fugate made that possibility a reality. He has used both best management practices and an innovative marketing strategy to help increase his farm income. This process started in 1999 when he went to the Claiborne County Soil Conservation District to request technical assistance to change his farm operation and make it more productive. In 1999 Rodney's farm operation consisted of a small cow/calf beef cattle operation of 20 cows and 1 bull. The farm also grew one acre of tobacco and had small pork production for private use.

In 2001 through the used of best management practices, Rodney converted his farming system into a high intensity rotational grazing meat goat operation. He now has 70 head of Boer meat goats with provisions to increase and maintain a 200 head Boer meat goat operation.

Ten acres of tobacco/fescue hay were converted to Cheyenne and Wrangler Bermuda grass. The Bermuda grass is used for summer forage and hay production, and he has an additional forty-two acres of fescue pasture to graze goats. Rodney is one of the pioneers for using Bermuda grass for hay and forage in Claiborne County.

Mr. Fugate installed a watering system in 2003 for high intensity rotational grazing. This system consists of five freeze-proof water tanks located in fence rows and strategic areas to provide optimum rotational grazing. Water for the system comes from two wells and is pumped to underground storage tanks which feed the freeze-proof watering tanks. He also installed 7,120 feet of six strand high-tensile electric fence. This fence breaks up the larger fields into smaller paddocks and allows for the high intensity rotational grazing.

Mr. Fugate faced some financial and educational obstacles to implement this transition. He worked with the Claiborne County Soil Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to help with cost share in implementing the best management practices. He also learned new farming skills and management practices to overcome his lack of goat production experience.

He has used innovative marketing including the internet, direct ads, the local newspaper, and TV advertisement to help promote his Boer meat goat operation. Another innovative marketing approach he used was to become a member of the Tennessee Goat Producers Association (TGPA). In August 2005 he was elected to serve on the board of directors of TGPA as the Secretary and Treasurer. He is using his position as an officer with the TGPA to promote goat production. Mr. Fugate is also working with the TGPA Board to secure a grant from USDA to create a cooperative market for meat goats. And he is also an Advisory member of the Claiborne County Soil Conservation District where he promotes conservation throughout Claiborne County.

Mr. Fugate's work with goats has created greater interest in the goat market in Claiborne and surrounding counties. This new endeavor has increased feed store purchase in the local economy and has increased goat sells at the nearest markets. Rodney has had a substantial income increase from his previous operation and has even greater income potential in the future.



Photo above: TSU representatives (left) with Rodney Fugate and Ken Givens, Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture.



Photo above: James Ford, NRCS State Conservationist, with Rodney Fugate.



Photo above: Todd Reed, District Conservationist, Claiborne County and Rodney Fugate at the NRCS exhibit.

Manchester 4-H Wildlife Judging Team Places 3rd in the Nation

The 4-H Wildlife Judging team from Manchester placed third in the nation at the National Wildlife Habitat Judging Contest held outside of Madison, Wisconsin. The team, consisting of Will Rhoads, Jeremy Mills, Jonathan Mills and Pierce Morrison tested their skills against the best in the United States.

4-H Wildlife Judging teaches students skills including how to evaluate a site for many different wildlife species, wildlife management practices, and in what instances to apply them; to interpret aerial photographs for different wildlife species, then to orally give reasons as to their placings; to identify foods that wildlife animals eat and which animals eat them; and how to write a rural wildlife management plan and an urban wildlife management plan.

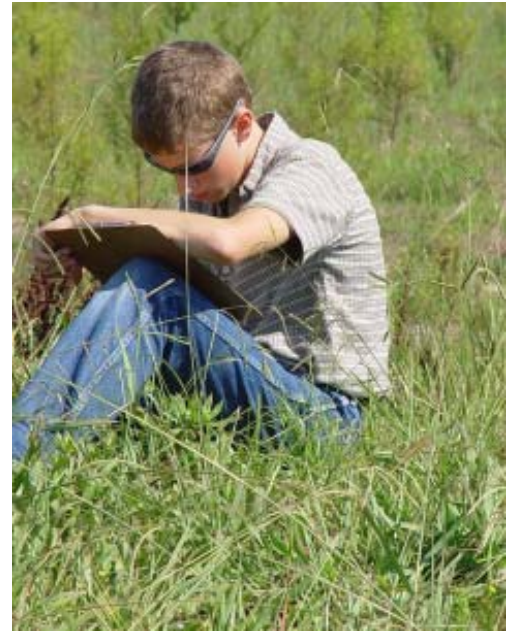
After spending months of preparation, the team competed in evaluating a rural wildlife site and selecting appropriate management practices; writing a complete wildlife management plan; evaluating an urban wildlife site and writing a complete wildlife management plan and landscape sketch; interpreting aerial photographs for wildlife species and giving oral reasons; and identifying wildlife foods and the animals that eat those foods.

The team placed third overall in the contest, second in the nation with their Rural Wildlife Management Plan, and third with their Urban Wildlife Management Plan.

Jeremy Mills ranked 4th highest individual in the nation in wildlife foods, 6th in wildlife management practices and ninth in the aerial photograph interpretation and oral reasons. Jonathan Mills ranked 7th in the nation in aerial photograph interpretation and oral reasons.

Barry Rhoads, adult volunteer leader and coach, and Sara Steelman, coach of the team, accompanied the team to the contest.

Sponsors making the trip possible were the Southern Middle TN Quail Unlimited & Dove Chapter # 696; Ducks Unlimited local chapter; the Coffee County Agricultural Extension Service – 4-H Clubs; Coffee County Soil Conservation District; Mike Thompson Ford-Mercury-Mazda; Aerospace Testing Alliance; Orville-Rhoads and Associates, and the State 4-H Office of Tennessee.



Photos above and below: Team members compete in the National Wildlife Habitat Judging Contest in Wisconsin.

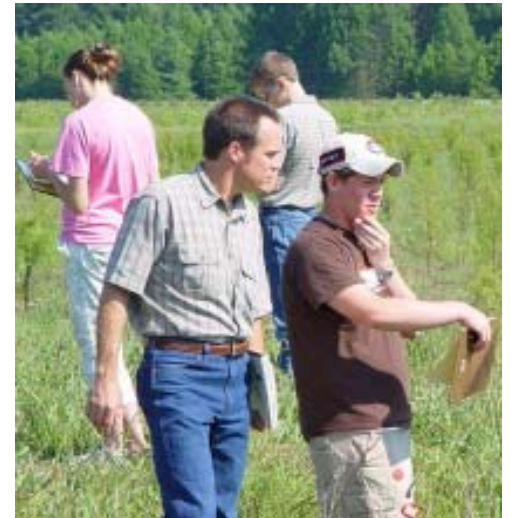


Photo at left: The Manchester Wildlife Judging team with coach Sara Steelman received sponsorship to the National Contest in Wisconsin from various groups including the local Quail Unlimited Chapter. Chris Wolkonowski and Gary Moore, representatives of the local Quail Unlimited Chapter, made the presentation on behalf of the local chapter.



Restoring Native Plants with the Grassland Reserve Program

by Josh Landrum, Earth Team Volunteer

Dr. David Buehler, a wildlife professor at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, recently became one of the first private landowners to establish native warm season grass under the Grassland Reserve Program in the state of Tennessee. Dr. Buehler is giving something back to the wildlife that he educates students about while working at UT. The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property.

Dr. Buehler planted a short grass mixture on his Grainger Co. farm in hopes of increasing the presence of wildlife. In just one year since establishment of native warm season grasses, he has seen a "very positive response" of wildlife. He has seen more grassland dependent songbirds, rabbits, and turkey using his fields in the past year. He hopes that in time he will be able to attract northern bobwhite quail to his farm.

He has also expressed interest in the advantages of using native warm season grass for grazing and haying. While he does not own cattle himself, he hopes to establish a cooperative agreement with his neighbors who own cattle where he will trade his native warm season grass hay for some of their beef. His expectations are that limited grazing might actually help improve the wildlife habitat.

When asked about his overall experience with native warm season grass, he said, "I am very pleased with the success of the establishment of the grasses and the wildlife response although I have encountered weed control problems that I didn't anticipate. My experience has clearly shown that establishment of native warm season grass is fairly easy although it requires regular maintenance to control weeds and maintain the structure that you want for wildlife." Dr. Buehler's willingness to share his success in using native grasses for wildlife and cattle will encourage other private landowners to use the Grassland Reserve Program to establish native warm season grasses on their property.



Photo above (l to r): Natalie Freeman, Soil Conservationist, Hamblen/Grainger County; Paul McQuade, District Conservationist, Hamblen/Grainger County; and Dr. David Buehler, landowner and wildlife professor at UT Knoxville. Photo by Josh Landrum, a Wildlife and Fisheries Student at the University of Tennessee.

Emergency Watershed Protection Project on Deerfoot Creek

by Carolyn Dillard

"Everything has changed for the better since this project was completed," stated Phillip Farmer about an EWP project completed on Deerfoot Creek. Farmer, who owns the property adjacent to the eroded bank on Deerfoot Drive in Cheatham County said, "We lost over \$30,000 due to property damages in 1½ hour during the last 3 to 4 inch rain that we had before the project was completed."

Another neighbor, Margaret Dill, stated that the project is working well and she hopes nothing happens to mess it up. "This has really made a difference to us", Dill stated.

The streambank restoration project was a cooperative effort between the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Cheatham County Highway Department.

Photos at right: Top photo shows streambank before EWP project. The bottom photo shows the Deerfoot Creek EWP project when completed.



Joe K. Thomas

1946 - 2006

NRCS-Tennessee lost a great friend and the people of Tennessee lost a conservation leader this month. Joe K. Thomas, III died in an accident on his Sullivan County farm on Monday September 11, 2006.

State Conservationist James W. Ford said, "Joe K. Thomas, III is leaving a conservation legacy unlike no other, and he will be greatly missed by NRCS and our employees, both here and throughout the nation. Joe was a leader, a doer, and the very model of a good steward of the land. In short, he was the perfect farmer."

In 2005, the Sullivan County District Board voted unanimously to honor Mr. Thomas as the Conservation Farmer of the Year. In early September 2006, he received the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts Conservation Farmer of the Year award for East Tennessee. He was a Soil Conservation District Supervisor for 30 years, beginning in 1976, serving as District Chairman for the last 20 years. He also served the TACD as Vice-President from 1981 to 1985 and as President from 1985 to 1989.

Mr. Thomas' commitment to conservation was not limited to Tennessee. He sat on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Conservation Districts from 1984 to 2002, where he was able to lend his knowledge and expertise to conservation-minded farmers and landowners across the nation.

But it was in Sullivan County where Joe set the best example of good stewardship for other landowners. His and his wife Clara's consistent improvement to the land, crops and cattle showed others that conservation work will improve the land, the business and the community. Because of Joe and the Thomas family, visitors from far and wide have benefited from seeing what has been accomplished on the family farm.

NRCS in Tennessee is grateful for Joe's unyielding commitment to conservation and to the betterment of the community. He was a mentor to many young conservationists throughout Tennessee and the United States, and his legacy will live on through them as well as through the lasting good work he accomplished helping the land.



Samuel R. Bacon

1900—2006



NRCS-Tennessee mourns the loss of Samuel R. Bacon, 106, of Cookeville, who died on September 9, 2006.

Mr. Bacon, who was born on July 1, 1900, was NRCS' senior former employee in the entire nation. He was honored last year at his 105th birthday celebration and awarded commendations from State Conservationist James Ford, then-Chief Bruce Knight, and Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns.

Mr. Bacon worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture for 35 years. A large part of that time (1945-1963) was in Tennessee with NRCS (then known as the Soil Conservation Service.) In Tennessee, Mr. Bacon was a soil scientist, and he co-authored several soil surveys produced for counties throughout the state.

Mr. Bacon graduated from the University of Maryland in 1924 and worked for the Agricultural Research Service starting in 1928. He continued with the Soil Erosion Service in North Carolina in 1935, and then came to Tennessee as a soil conservationist in 1945. After 35 years with the USDA he retired in Cookeville and started his own business distributing small items to retail stores. He retired from that second career at age 91. Mr. Bacon and his late wife, Reba, contributed to dozens of charities, and they were instrumental in helping to establish the Cumberland Art Society. In his last years he remained quite active, serving meals-on-wheels to shut-ins and visiting regularly with his friends and former co-workers at NRCS.

Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love and something to hope for. -

Joseph Addison

Arthur Bentley 1936 - 2006



Arthur began work in the 1960's as a WAE assisting with watershed work on Cane Creek in Lauderdale County, Tennessee. He began working full-time as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Ripley Field Office in 1974.

Arthur was highly respected for his expertise in soil and water conservation and for his willingness to go the extra mile to help landowners in Lauderdale County with any soil and water conservation matter. NRCS employees lost more than a co-worker, they lost a friend. He will truly be missed by his NRCS co-workers, Soil Conservation District officials, Cane Creek Watershed District officials, and local landowners in Lauderdale County.

He also operated a family farm in the Halls, Tennessee area. Arthur was 69 years old and is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Bentley; one son, Terry Bentley; one daughter, Beth Bentley; two grandchildren, five brothers, and numerous other relatives.

Arthur's commitment to conservation left a mark on the land that will endure for generations.



The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service recently lost a true friend to soil and water conservation. Arthur Bentley, Soil Conservation Technician for the Ripley Field Office died on August 3, 2006 at Baptist Memorial Hospital from a massive heart attack.

Photo at right: Arthur Bentley working with Lauderdale County landowner.

Smoky Mountain RC&D Development Forum Scheduled for September 26-27, 2006

The Smoky Mountain RC&D invites everyone to join them at the upcoming forum A New Vision for Regional & Economic Development. The forum will open with a reception at 6:00 p.m. on September 26th at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Morristown. The seminars and workshops will begin at 9 a.m. EDT on September 27th at the same location.



There is no fee for the conference, but anyone planning to attend should email or call Eston Williams at eston.williams@tn.usda.gov or 865-674-8890. This will allow them to plan for the number of attendees.

Workshop topics include:

- Becoming Uncommon: And Winning in the NOW Economy"
- "Global is the New Local"
- "New Demographic Groups in the South and Their Impacts on Economic Development
- "Can Small Towns Be Cool"

The Holiday Inn Conference Center is located off I-81 at Exit 8 in Morristown. The lodging/reservation, please call 423-487-2400.

Davidson County Landowner Makes Strides for Conservation

by Carolyn Dillard

Alan Williams has made strides for conservation on his family farm in the Whites Creek Community. The 144 acre farm includes 74 acres of woodland and 70 acres of pastureland. Alan's goals for the farm include: timber production; wildlife habitat improvement for the turkey, deer and quail; and adequate grazing for the cattle and horses on the farm. Over time, the streambanks of Tranthom Branch, a tributary to Whites Creek, had been eroded by the cattle and horses having open access to the creek.

For assistance in reaching his goals, Alan turned to the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Davidson County Soil Conservation District. Together, they developed a plan that would enable him to achieve his goals and improve the soil and water quality on his farm. Several Best Management Practices were installed to help him meet these goals.

First, a heavy use area was installed as a feeding pad to reduce mud problems. Stream crossings were established to provide stable areas for equipment and livestock to cross the stream and allowing access to other paddocks. Then an eroding streambank was treated to reduce sedimentation in the creek.

After these projects were completed, fencing was installed to exclude livestock from forest land, creeks and sensitive areas and to divide the fields for a rotational grazing system. Cost share assistance for these projects was provided by the TN Dept. of Agriculture and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Future plans include a warm season grass planting, perennial food plot, and timber harvest.



Photo above: Davidson County landowner Alan Williams installed exclusion fencing to achieve his conservation goals.



Photo above: Fencing was installed to exclude livestock from forest land, creeks and sensitive areas and to divide the fields for rotational grazing.



Photo above: The heavy use area before the feeding pad was installed.

Perry County Farm on the National Register of Historic Places

by Larry Lofton

McDonald Craig, a RC&D director and Perry County farmer now has the distinction of having his family farm placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The designation was recently announced by Herbert Harper, Exec. Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission.

The road to the designation began as a partnership activity between the Buffalo/Duck River RC&D Council and the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University. Buffalo/Duck River RC&D staff provided Mr. Craig assistance in applying for a Tennessee Century Farm designation. The Center for Historic Preservation saw the significant history and the potential for the Craig family farm in the Century Farm application.

McDonald's great grandfather, a freed slave, purchased the farm in 1871 and the farm has been in the family since that time. Farm enterprises have included corn, soybeans, pasture and hay, and livestock, as well as, managed stands of hardwood and softwood timber. The farm is also home to a bus McDonald used to drive African-American children to Henderson County schools during the era of school segregation.

The Craig family loved music and McDonald Craig has carried on this tradition playing his own brand of traditional country music for over fifty years at venues in Tennessee and throughout the United States.



Photo above: Rosetta and McDonald Craig on their family farm that has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Photo provided by Tennessee Arts Commission.

Milky Way Chapter of Quail Forever Organized

Kris Bailey, a district technician for the Giles County Soil Conservation District, is Treasurer of the Milky Way Chapter of Quail Forever which got its charter on March 31. A group of local quail enthusiasts led by Quail Forever biologist Andy Edwards, a Pulaski native, pulled together to form this chapter. The group will focus its efforts on improving Giles County habitat for local quail populations, adult education forums, and youth events to get youth involved in conservation, wildlife and outdoors in general.

Quail Forever was launched by Pheasants Forever to address the continuing loss of habitat suitable for quail and subsequent quail population decline. Unlike other national conservation organizations, local chapters of Quail Forever and Pheasants Forever determine how 100 percent of their locally raised conservation funds will be spent. Because members have local control they get to see the fruits of their efforts while getting the benefits of belonging to a national organization. Tennessee has five other chapters located in DeKalb County; Memphis; the Cumberland Plateau; the Tri-Cities of Bristol, Johnson City, and Kingsport; and Knoxville.

Bailey said the chapter's habitat efforts will focus on the promotion of conservation programs available for landowner enrollment which will deliver an immediate benefit for quail in Giles County. "Giles County landowners care about quail and all species of wildlife. However, I don't think there's ever been enough focus on promoting these conservation programs to those landowners, so they don't understand the financial and wildlife benefits to enrollment," reported Bailey. "This chapter will serve to narrow that gap in understanding, because habitat is the key. Quail will be gone from the landscape if we don't act to improve the habitat situation today."

As much as 80 percent of the country's bobwhite quail have disappeared since 1980 because of the substantial loss of habitat suitable for quail. Factors leading to the loss of quail habitat across the U.S. include intensified farming and forestry practices, succession of grassland ecosystems to forests, overwhelming presence of exotic grasses like fescue, and urban sprawl.

For information on starting a new chapter, contact Andy Edwards at 931-424-3211 or 931-638-9478. Kris Bailey can be contacted at 931-363-5353, x110 or kris.bailey@one.usda.gov.



Kris Bailey, left, and Andy Edwards, officers of the Milky Way Chapter.

Tennessee NRCS Soil Scientists at the 18th World Congress of Soil Science

by Doug Slabaugh

The 18th World Congress of Soil Science (WCSS) was held in Philadelphia, PA July 9-15 of this year. This was the first World Soils Congress held in the U.S. since 1960. The scientific program focused on multi-disciplinary soil science advances under the theme, "Frontiers of Soil Science: Technology and the Information Age." This event was hailed by the organizers as being a "unique convergence of the world's leading professionals in soil science." The previous WCSS was held in Bangkok, Thailand in 2002 and the next will be held in Brisbane, Australia in 2010. Presentations organized into topical symposia were given by thousands of soil scientists from around the world on such topics as GIS technologies, land-use analysis, environmental soil biology, plant/soil interaction, hazardous waste remediation, precision agriculture, and more. Access to other information including abstracts of the presentations are available at: www.18wcsc.org.

Rick Livingston and Anthony Khiel, NRCS Soil Scientists in Tennessee, attended the recent World Congress of Soil Science (WCSS) and made poster presentations related to current soils work in Tennessee. Rick's presentation was titled: "Predicting Depth to Subsurface Soil Features Using Differential GPS and GIS Techniques." Dwain Daniels from the NRCS National Cartographic and Geospatial Center in Fort Worth, TX and David McMillen, Tennessee Assistant State Soil Scientist, coauthored the presentation. Anthony's presentation was titled: "Soil Resource Inventory of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park" and was coauthored by Doug Thomas, NRCS Soil Scientist in North Carolina.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) were the two primary sponsors of this meeting and both contributed funds at the "Diamond" level which is a contribution of more than \$50,000 each. The NRCS had the most prominent display in the exhibitors area. Highlights of the large display included three high definition computer displays that were used to demonstrate web based soils information. Web accessible information such as the Web Soil Survey, Soil Data Mart, Official Soil Series Descriptions, and Soil Lab Data, were among the applications displayed and demonstrated to congress attendees from all over the world. Additionally, a compact disc containing all of the current *National Cooperative Soil Survey Standards Documents*, posters of the *Global Soil Regions* and *History of Soil Science*, tote bags and other items were free to the attendees.



Photos (above and below): NRCS had the most prominent display in the exhibitors area. Highlights of the large display included three high definition computer displays that were used to demonstrate web based soils information such as the Web Soil Survey, Soil Data Mart, Official Soil Series Descriptions, and Soil Lab Data.





Appalachian Quilt Trail

by Lindy Turner

There are currently 145 Quilt Squares installed in East Tennessee counties with a projected 194 to be installed within 12 months. The Appalachian Quilt Trail is being coordinated as a special project of the East TN

Foundation with leadership and block ownership by Clinch-Powell, Appalachian and Smoky Mountain Resource Conservation & Development Councils (RC&D). The RC&D Councils are 501C3 not-for-profit organizations working to blend community development with natural resources protection.

The idea for the quilt trails in Tennessee was a result of tourism feasibility commissioned in 2000 by the Clinch-Powell Enterprise Community. The Clinch-Powell Enterprise Community is a ten year federal designation by the USDA Rural Development. The Clinch-Powell EC serves Claiborne, Grainger, Hancock, Hawkins and Union counties. The Clinch-Powell RC&D Council serves as the lead entity and fiscal agent for the Enterprise Community.

The AQT is capturing and showcasing East Tennessee's unique culture and heritage along rural roads in our region. The AQT is defined by a tapestry of large wooden blocks which have been hand-painted using traditional quilt patterns. The striking quilt patterns which are displayed in conspicuous settings on barns, artists' studios, locally owned shops and historic buildings situated along intentional loops will guide tourists, cultural visitors and residents through a maze of East Tennessee's beautiful countryside.

The Appalachian Quilt Trail provides visitors with opportunities to slow down and experience hospitality, arts, crafts, local produce and agricultural products, as well as history along the rural roads of Appalachia. This comprehensive tourism strategy links business to culture and heritage to preservation by offering small towns and communities across Tennessee a means to preserve their way of life, conserve their natural resources, create new jobs and celebrate what makes them unique and authentic.

The 20th and final Grainger County quilt block was installed on Thursday August 20th, marking a milestone in the development of the AQT. Grants are being awarded by USDA Rural Development to the Clinch-Powell RC&D/EC to jump start the marketing for the portion of the trail located in the Clinch-Powell region (Grainger, Claiborne, Hancock, Hawkins and Union counties). These funds will be used to develop a comprehensive website, signage and marketing plan that will be the basis for the entire Appalachian Quilt Trail in the future.

Additionally funds to develop a plan for a Heritage Craft Enterprise built around the AQT are also being awarded. The AQT is committed to maintaining an authentic and quality experience in all aspects related to the AQT. The logo is being trademarked and products marketed will fall under a legal license in order to promote them using the quilt trail and logo. This is in an effort to ensure that local resources stay in local communities to support local businesses.

For more information about the Appalachian Quilt Trail, visit the web site at www.quilttrail.org.



Photo above: Congressman Zach Wamp and Cherry Acuff, Chairperson,



Photo above: Doris Hixon, barn owner; Cherry Acuff, Clinch-Powell RC&D Chairperson; Ruth Tackett, State Director Rural Development; Paul Merritt, Grainger County Mayor; Frances Rasnic, C-P Enterprise Community Chair; Congressman Zach Wamp; and Terry Holley, East TN Foundation VP.

National RC&D Meeting held in Savannah

RC&D directors from ten Tennessee councils, USDA-NRCS personnel and partnering agency representatives attended the national RC&D Meeting in Savannah. Over 1400 people from across the United States participated in the four day event.

National Association President Sharon Ruggi presided over the conference. Speakers included United States Under-Secretary of Agriculture Mark Rey, then-Chief Bruce Knight and National RC&D Association Executive Director Roberta Jeanquart.

The National RC&D awards banquet featured a presentation by Coach Bill Yoast, author of "Remember the Titans" that inspired the acclaimed movie. Coach Yoast spoke on leadership that inspires, motivates and builds consensus and cooperation to make all communities better places. He noted that the RC&D program was a classic example of leadership that works for communities at the local level.

Over sixty training sessions were held addressing a wide variety of natural resource management conservation as well as community development needs. Ninety nine success stories illustrated how RC&D councils are making a difference in communities all across the nation through effective partnerships with local governments, organizations and agencies.



Above, Glenda Rickman looks for items at the Silent Auction.

Below: Attendees reached the convention hotel by boat.



Photo above: President Bill Williams leads the TN delegation in issue discussion before the listening session.



Photo above: The Tennessee delegation at the Southeastern RC&D Conference.

Giles County Soil Conservation District's Wildlife Habitat & Native Grass Field Day - Wednesday, October 4th, 8:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Attendees will learn to manage and improve wildlife habitat and to include native warm season grasses for forage production. The tour is at the Wade Edde Farm which has over 200 acres managed primarily for quail, deer, and turkey. Lunch will be provided.

The program includes:

Burning for Wildlife - Andy Edwards, Regional Biologist-Quail Forever, Inc.

CRP Buffers - Mark Gudlin, Private Lands Liaison-TWRA

Quail Management 101 - Dr. Craig Harper, Extension Wildlife Specialist-UT

Establishing Native Warm Season

Grasses - Robin Mayberry, Private Lands Biologist-NRCS

Improving Your Farm For Wildlife - Mike Hansbrough, Private Lands Biologist-NRCS

Optional afternoon sessions include:

Calibrating Native Warm Season Grass Drill and Herbicide Sprayers and a presentation on USDA cost-share at the Giles County SCD office.

The morning attendance will earn a possible 3 CCA points; all-day attendance will earn a possible 5 CCA points. Pesticide points may also be available for attendance. **Please RSVP by September 22nd** to 931-363-5353, ext. 3 or email to Kris.bailey@one.usda.gov

Partners include: Wade Edde; Giles County SCD; Milky Way Chapter Quail Forever; Quail Unlimited; National Fish & Wildlife Foundation; NRCS; TDA; TDF; UT; and TWRA.

Directions: From Pulaski take Hwy 64 East and take a right on Aymett Town Rd. The farm will be on the right. If you are coming from I-65, get off at Exit 14 and take Hwy 64 West for approximately 5 miles, then take a left on Leatherwood Creek Road; then turn right on Aymett Town Road. The farm will be on your left. Signs will be posted on Hwy 64.

Area Office Open in Knoxville

The Knoxville Area Office is now open at 9737 Cogdill Road, Suite 152. Area Office personnel moved in September 6. The phone number is 865-671-3830.

The Field Office moved to this location on September 14, and the Smoky Mountain RC&D is scheduled to move in October 1.



Photo above: The Knoxville Area Office is now open at 9737 Cogdill Road, Suite 152.

Soil and Water Conservation Society's Annual Fall Meeting Fall Creek Falls State Park - Piney Room October 13 and 14, 2006

The International Erosion Control Association is co-sponsoring this two-day event which will begin at 12:00 noon on October 13. There is no registration fee and it is open to anyone wishing to attend.

Topics on the agenda include:

- ◆An Introduction to the International Erosion Control Association
- ◆Soil Surveys - A history of how they were compiled and accessing the current on-line data bank
- ◆Stream Determinations - Differences between Streams, Intermittent Streams and Wet Weather Conveyances
- ◆Wetland Determinations-Remediation Successes/Failures
- ◆Beaver Creek Restoration Project Overview
- ◆New RUSLE II Construction Module
- ◆An Introduction to CPESC

There will also be a social on Friday night, a chance to play golf, and hike to Fall Creek Falls. Contact Charles Roberts for more information at cvroberts@comcast.net or 615/824-6349 or 615-277-2575.

2006 East Regional Earth Team Volunteer Conference

by Dimple Geesling

Dimple Geesling, State ET coordinator attended the 2006 East Regional Earth Team Volunteer Conference held on August 14-18 in Charleston, SC. Earth Team Volunteer Coordinators from along the East coast gathered together to share ideas and discuss hot topics of interest.

Tennessee was one of the two states that set up an exhibit to highlight Earth Team projects and accomplishments. The exhibit also included a scrapbook showcasing Tennessee Earth Team projects.

Some topics of discussion included "Understanding the Earth Team Database", "Earth Team Security Issues", "Volunteer Demographics" and "Welcoming Diversity".

Earth Team Volunteer Coordinators also had the opportunity to enjoy the warm Carolina sun by participating in a hands-on dune restoration project on the shore of Sullivan's Island, as well as get a taste of the South with an authentic Lowcountry Beaufort Stew dinner.

Photo top right: Dimple Geesling staffs the TN Earth Team Exhibit at the East Regional Earth Team Volunteer Conference.

Photo bottom right: Conference attendees participated in a hands-on dune restoration project on the shore of Sullivan's Island.



Early Successional Habitat Field Day

More than 150 natural resources professionals and private landowners attended the UT/NRCS Early Successional Habitat Field Day conducted on June 22, 2006 at Mayfield Farm in McMinn County. The Mayfield Farm is one of seven study sites used in early successional habitat research by the University of Tennessee in conjunction with the USDA/NRCS Bobwhite Restoration Project.

This field event included morning and afternoon tours with technical sessions and vendor booths scheduled during lunch. Topics included native warm-season grass establishment and management, establishing quality early successional habitat using the seedbank, bobwhite biology, prescribed fire management, and more. For an overview of the field day events, go to: http://hdclcl.cfr.msstate.edu/nbci/UT_Project_field_day.htm